

Annex to November 29, 1963, Diary:

About 5:30 on Friday, November 29, while I was sitting around the fire after a game of golf at Lloyd Neck, the telephone rang and I was advised that the President wanted to speak with me. I went to the phone and the White House operator said that the President wanted to speak with me, that he was on another line, and would I hold on for a minute. After a short wait the operator told me that someone had gone into the room and that she would call me back.

She called me back in five minutes. This gave me a brief chance to puzzle out what it was the President wanted to say to me. As it turned out, aided by some news items that the President was considering appointing a high-level commission to look into all the circumstances of the assassination of the President, I was led to put this as the first possibility. Soon the call came through. The President was on the line. I told him how much my thoughts had been with him in recent days. He thanked me. Then in a very kind expression of appreciation for what he thought I had done for the country over the years, he said he wished me to do a job for him. I asked him what it was. He said he was appointing a commission to look into all the circumstances surrounding the assassination and the later killing of the man believed responsible for the assassination. This commission would include the Chief Justice, members of the House and Senate from both parties, and two men outside of government, including myself, if I would serve.

I told the President without hesitation that I was prepared to serve if he felt I could be of service to him and the nation. I said that I assumed that he had considered my recent job and that he did not consider that this service was in any way an impediment. He said he had carefully considered it and he felt that, on the contrary, it would be helpful. I said I assumed that what he had told me was entirely confidential. He said it was until it was announced and he did not know the exact hour of that. I said I would, of course, maintain the confidence.